

CAMDEN CONFERENCE DISCUSSION SERIES

What's the Truth about Genetically Modified Foods?

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Reading List

Essential Articles and Videos

1. [The Truth about GMOs](#). (2013) An article in Boston Review by Pamela Ronald, 10 pages. *Dr. Ronald is a researcher from University of California, Davis, whose work for this presentation was funded by the NSF, NIH, USDA, DOE, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. She is not funded by Monsanto. Ronald concludes that almost all the food we eat has been genetically altered over time, and scientists agree there is no known harm to humans because of any GMO crop. And, the FDA concludes, there is no known or logical definition of GMO foods, making labeling impossible. It is time, she argues, to change the debate about food production to environmental, economic, and social impacts, which are the three pillars of sustainability.*

Note: To print out this article, simply print the page using your computer's print command.

2. [Genetic Engineering in Agriculture](#). (2012) Article by the Union of Concerned Scientists in their Food and Agriculture section. 4 pages. *The Union of Concerned Scientists offers their point of view on the benefits as well as the health and environmental risks of GM foods.*

Note: To print this article, click on the PRINT icon that appears above the title of the article, and then use your computer's print command to print the article.

Note: This article contains a number of valuable links to additional articles from the Union of Concerned Scientists on related topics.

3. [Mark Lynas: From GMO Hater to Supporter](#). (2013) Brief article in Forbes by Aaron Perlut that includes an 18-minute video interview with Mark Lynas. *The video found in this article is an interview with Mark Lynas, a British environmentalist, who for many years fought the advance of GMOs. Given the rising evidence for positive effects of GMO crops, Lynas now celebrates the advances in crop productivity with GMO seeds.*

Optional Readings and Videos

1. [Monsanto: The parable of the sower](#). (2009) Article in the *Economist*. 7 pages.

Monsanto is celebrated in this article for spending billions of dollars to develop seeds for increasing agricultural output around the globe. The focus for Monsanto's research is presented as twofold: 1) breeding through better mapping of a seed's genetic qualities, and 2) genetic modification to improve seed performance.

Note: To print out this article, click on the Print icon that appears to the right of the title of the article.

2. [Monsanto Protection Act' slips silently through US Congress](#). (2013) Article in *RT USA*. 2 pages.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the Agriculture Appropriations Bill in March 2013, which includes a provision protecting genetically modified seeds from litigation in the face of health risks. Some refer to this Bill as the "Monsanto Protection Act."

Note: To print out this article, simply print the page using your computer's print command.

3. [The spread of GM Crops: Taking root](#). (2010) Article in the *Economist*. 3 pages.

A 2010 study reports that GMO crops are on the rise, especially in the developing nations. The use of GMOs has led to economic gains where there exists political pressure to increase agricultural productivity.

Note: To print out this article, click on the Print icon that appears to the right of the title of the article.

4. [Organic-Food Champion's Departure from USDA Sows Seeds of Concern](#). (2013) Article by Jerry Hagstrom, in *NationalJournal*. 3 pages. (Kathleen Merrigan, the focus of this article, will be a Camden Conference Speaker in February 2014.)

Kathleen Merrigan resigned in March 2013 as Deputy Secretary of the US Agriculture Department, where she required every division of the USDA to think about how it can help local food producers prosper. Conventional and biotech farmers and other advocates claim that her efforts are "silly" given the challenge of producing food on a large scale and increasing exports. Some fans believe she was forced out.

Note: To print out this article, simply print the page using your computer's print command.

5. [Monsanto Go Home: EU Slams door on GM Food amid Protests](#). (2013) YouTube video, 2 minutes.

Protests across Europe about the safety of biotech foods have caused plans for new GMO crops in the EU to be scrapped. Monsanto has had to “go home” to the USA.

Note: If you care to follow and read the transcript of the video, click on the “Transcript” icon that appears with the other icons just below the title of the video.

6. [Meet Calestous Juma, Africa’s genetically modified crop optimist](#). (2013) Article in The Toronto Star by Kate Allen, 5 pages. (Dr. Juma will be a Camden Conference Speaker in February, 2014).

Dr. Juma, a professor of international development at Harvard, is celebrated as Africa’s genetically modified crop optimist. Because of his experiences as a child in Kenya with the newly planted cassava plant, he has championed GMO crops throughout his career. His field work at the research center he launched in Nairobi led to his leadership at the United Nations and to his conclusions that GMO plantings raise crop yields. GMO crops, he argues, have already saved millions of hectares of land in Africa, and hold great promise for future global food needs as population rises dramatically over the next decades.

Note: To print out this article, click on the printer icon that appears above the photo and below the title then use your computer’s print command to print the article.

7. [20 questions on genetically modified foods](#). (2002) Questions and answers provided by the World Health Organization. 9 pages.

These questions and answers have been prepared by WHO in response to questions and concerns by a number of WHO Member State Governments with regard to the nature and safety of genetically modified food.

Note: To print out these questions and answers, click on the printer icon that appears to the right of the title.

8. [Risks of Generic Engineering](#). (2013) Article by the Union of Concerned Scientists in their Food & Agricultural section. 5 pages.

In this article the Union of Concerned Scientists elaborates on what harmful effects might turn out to be associated with the use of genetically engineered (GE) organisms. They consider health risks, environmental risks, and unknown risks and conclude by discussing the problems of risk assessment in realm of genetic engineering.

Note: To print this article, click on the PRINT icon that appears above the title of the article, and then use your computer’s print command to print the article.